Public Safety Canada | Sécurité publique Canada

Canada

BUILDING A **SAFE** AND **RESILIENT CANADA**

Overview of Direct Intervention Approaches to Address Youth Gangs and Youth Violence

Part I: Background 2

Part II: Options For Applicants 5

Option 1 – Implementing An Established Program Or Approach 5

Option 2 – Implementing Customized Interventions 14

Part III: Considerations for Developing a Strong Project 19

References 25

Part I: Background

Gang-involved youth are considered to be some of the main perpetrators (and victims) of crime and violence, and impose a high burden on society in terms of criminal justice system and other societal costs. For example, the negative outcomes of gang involvement for individuals can include: dropping out of school; lack of employment opportunities or success; exposure to and involvement in drugs and alcohol use; and teenage parenthood. Moreover, participation in gangs and violence can reduce youths' connections to other prosocial activities, and they may cut ties with family, friends, schools and religious communities (Pyrooz, Sweeten, & Piquero, 2013). In order to avert these negative consequences, it is critical to try and prevent at-risk youth from joining gangs, and to intervene in the lives of current youth gang members.

In general, youth gang membership cuts across many demographic, geographic and socioeconomic contexts.

However, certain groups are disproportionately vulnerable to gang recruitment and involvement. Below is a brief overview of some of these populations. For a more detailed review of some of these groups, see ***Youth Gangs in Canada: A Review of Current Topics and Issues***.

Some Key Populations of Interest

Indigenous Youth

One population of interest is Indigenous youth, as the proportion of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples is continuing to increase rapidly compared to other groups in Canadian society, with an average age that is much younger than the rest of the population (Statistics Canada, 2011). It is believed that membership in Indigenous youth gangs is increasing in Canada, particularly in the Prairie Provinces and in northern Canada (Preston, Carr-Stewart, & Bruno, 2012). Gang involvement has precursors that can be traced back to historical and cultural losses, social and political inequalities, and economic barriers faced by many Indigenous people for multiple generations. These multiple levels of marginality can create conditions favourable to gang formation and involvement among Indigenous youth. These gangs are relatively fluid, gaining or declining in strength and numbers as membership changes and in response to various enforcement strategies (Grekul & LaBoucane-Benson, 2008). They also tend to be intergenerational, and participation and engagement in gang activities can begin as early as age eight (Comack, Deane, Morrissette, & Silver, 2013). Gang violence in the context of these groups may be different than that exhibited by other youth gangs in Canada. Rates of internalized violence, including suicide, substance overdoses, and other self-injurious behaviours may be higher than for some other externalized forms of criminal violence (Dunbar, 2017).

Black Youth

There is an overrepresentation of young Black men in gangs in Canada. While official statistics are very limited, a police survey conducted in 2003 demonstrated that gang membership is high among Black youth, particularly in Central and Eastern Canada (Chettleburgh, 2007). The *Toronto Youth Crime Victimization Survey* also found that self-reported gang membership was twice as high among Black youth (13%) than among other populations (i.e., white and Asian youth; see Wortley & Tanner, 2006). This population is also overrepresented in Canada's criminal justice system and with respect to violent offending and victimization (Owusu-Bempah & Wortley, 2014). Overrepresentation of Black youth in street-level crime and violence may be explained in part by historical oppression and current social and economic disadvantage. Research has shown that the impact of race on gang membership and criminal offending is reduced after controlling for household income, single-parent background, and community-level poverty and social disorganization. Further, perceptions of racial discrimination and feelings of social isolation may also play a role. Racialized youth are often over-policed in their neighbourhoods and disproportionately disciplined in schools (Salole & Abdulle, 2015). This may lead to perceptions of social injustice and an increased likelihood of violence-related behaviours (Caldwell, et al., 2004; Khenti, 2013; Reed et al., 2010). Group differences in exposure to racism and disadvantage may explain why Black youth appear to be more involved in gangs than are people from other ethnic groups (Wortley & Tanner, 2008).

Immigrant Youth

In addition, another population subgroup that can experience significant marginalization and numerous barriers to equitable opportunities in Canada is immigrant youth. As newcomers, these youth can experience linguistic, acculturative, psychological, and economic challenges to integration in Canadian society. These youth may also experience a wide range of obstacles and challenges in accessing services and support in the social services, education, health, and justice arenas. Although first-generation Canadian youth born into immigrant families, as a group, tend to do well economically, those from a visible minority background may experience substantial inequalities in their educational attainment and participation in the labour market. First generation Canadian youth may also experience sociocultural challenges with respect to competing cultural expectations, cultural identity, and intercultural interactions (Ngo, 2010; Sersli, Salazar, & Lozano, 2010). The breakdown of identities and the lack of a sense of belonging can create a void in social identity and connections, which can push immigrant and first-generation Canadian youth to seek out or be open to membership in alternative social networks, including gangs. Through these groups, these youth can receive social validation and support, and participate in delinquent behaviours (Ngo, 2010).

Young Women

Unlike in the United States, where an increasing number of young women are joining and forming gangs, Canada is thought to have relatively few female gang members, and most of them are assumed to remain in the exterior circle (Dorais & Corriveau, 2009). However, over the last number of years, research studies have observed variety in the positions young women adopt, and this is illustrated by how female gang members have more recently begun to develop more central and independent roles within the gang including drug dealing, recruiting and enforcing (e.g., calling in drug debts) (Nimmo, 2001). There are multiple types of gangs involving females. The 'auxiliary gang' is a support system for a main male gang. The 'co-ed gang' has both male and female gang members, there is no gender separation within the organization, and status within the gang is based on respect gained by the individual. Finally, there is the rare 'independent gang', a completely female gang that is not connected to any male or co-ed gang (Tobin, 2008). Further, there may be some variation in the treatment of female gang members based on the type of gang in which they are involved. Nimmo (2001) for example, observed that less organized gangs offered more power and status to women associates or members. Lauderdale and Burman (2009) observed that a woman's position within a gang is flexible and usually determined by gang leaders.

It is important to develop an approach to prevention and intervention for youth gangs and youth violence that addresses the specific dimensions of the problem for different populations, such as those identified above. Of course, there is no 'one size fits all' approach as each community has its own unique set of characteristics and circumstances. The same can be said for each youth who may be involved in a gang or at high risk of gang involvement. Therefore, only an approach adapted to individual characteristics and community contexts is likely to bring about positive change. There are many push and pull factors that influence a person's motivation or decision to join a gang. Individuals may be pushed into gangs because of negative external influences in their social environment such as poverty, family problems, and lack of success at school. At the same time, they may also join gangs because of the perceived benefits such as safety and protection, love and support, excitement, financial opportunities, and a sense of belonging (Dorais & Corriveau, 2008).

Population Specific Risk Factors

Knowledge of risk and protective factors provides insight into the larger picture of youth participation in gangs and violence, and can offer guidance for developing more focused efforts by helping to identify relevant areas for intervention (Peterson & Morgan, 2014). Youth who become involved in gangs often possess a relatively high number of risk factors prior to gang membership. Examining the accumulation of risk factors is the best known way to identify those most likely to become gang-involved (Decker, Melde, & Pyrooz, 2013). While there are risk factors that are similar across many youth gang populations[1], suggesting that pre-existing gang prevention and intervention strategies can work with different populations of youth, it is important to remember that certain risk factors may be unique to particular types of gangs and specific populations of gang

[1] For the most updated, comprehensive and age-graded overview of risk factors for gang involvement, see the United States National Gang Center website.

members. Below are just some examples of population-specific risk factors. For a more detailed overview, see ***Youth Gangs in Canada: A Review of Current Topics and Issues***. Prevention and intervention efforts should take population-specific risk factors into consideration in the development of appropriate approaches.

Indigenous Youth

Individual risk factors such as stressful experiences, early life hardships and negative emotions coming from marginality in other life domains have been shown to increase the odds of gang involvement for Indigenous youth (Goodwill, 2016). In addition, Indigenous adolescents tend to begin substance use at earlier ages than other racial and ethnic groups, and substance use has been found to be a significant factor for gang involvement among this group (Hautala, Sittner, & Whitbeck, 2016). Further, involvement in the Indigenous child welfare system is a risk factor for gang involvement and criminality that is quite firmly established in the literature. The path from child welfare to gang involvement is intensified through the displacement of Indigenous children that can lead to vulnerability, abuse and harm, trust and attachment problems, as well as an array of mental health issues. Gang members themselves state that their peers who have been raised in care make good targets for recruitment because gangs promise to act as family substitutes (Grekul & LaBoucane-Benson, 2008; Sinclair & Grekul, 2012).

Black Youth

At the individual level, a longitudinal study of African American youth in the United States found bullying victimization to predict membership in higher aggression and delinquency trajectories (Higgins et al., 2012). Further, African American gang members report lower levels of self-esteem than non-gang members (Krohn et al., 2011). At the family level, a lack of parental supervision and prosocial male role models are risk factors for gang involvement among Black youth. Research has shown that parental supervision is lower among African American gang members compared to non-gang members (Krohn et al., 2011) and increased parental support might have a stress-buffering role in reducing the effects of other risk factors such as sociodemographic or geographic factors (Li et al., 2002). Further, a lack of Black male role models in the lives of many Black youth may lead them to seek out support for masculine and racial identities through gang involvement (Khenti, 2013).

Immigrant Youth

At the family level, different rates of acculturation and conflict between home culture and dominant culture may contribute to immigrant and first-generation Canadian youths' growing detachment from parents and can lead to additional family stress and sustained family conflict due to different cultural expectations (Kanu, 2008; Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009). Further, low parental supervision and lack of parental modeling due to the physical or emotional absence of one or both parents (e.g., as a result of concern with economic survival) is common (Wortley & Tanner, 2006). At the community level, living in impoverished, high-crime neighbourhoods which experience violence and drug dealing as a regular part of daily life presents particular risks to immigrant and first-generation Canadian youth. A lack of integration means that these youth who live in these neighbourhoods may not have access to the same resources and programming as youth in other neighbourhoods (Sersli, Salazar, & Lozano, 2010).

Young Women

There are several risk factors for gang involvement which appear to have a different impact on youth based on gender. Young women who become involved with gangs are more likely to come from disadvantaged backgrounds, have experiences of marginalization, and have multiple family problems, including a history of physical, sexual and emotional abuse in the home, witness physical violence and substance abuse in the home, and have a family member who is gang involved or who has been incarcerated (Grekul & LaRoque, 2011; Nimmo, 2001). Further, at the school level, school commitment, attachment or expectations, and limited educational opportunities are more influential for females' than males' gang involvement (Esbensen et al., 2010; Peterson, 2012).

Part II: Options For Applicants

There are two options for applicants who have chosen to implement a direct intervention: (1) implementing an established program; or (2) implementing a customized intervention . These options, along with some examples, are described in more detail below.

Option 1 – Implementing An Established Program Or Approach

Applicants can choose to implement an already established program or approach, in which a structured combination of specific interventions is already prescribed. Although there is still some flexibility in how these programs or approaches are applied, each requires implementers to operate within a particular framework and employ a set of guiding principles. The programs and approaches described in the following section are some possible options that have demonstrated effective and promising results with youth at-risk of joining a gang and those who are already involved.

Wraparound

Theoretical Framework

The Wraparound approach has been implemented in the United States and Canada throughout the 1990s, as well as more recently (Debicki, 2011). Wraparound is an intensive, individualized care management program designed for youth with serious or complex emotional and/or behavioural problems. It is designed to prevent fragmentation and 'gaps' in the services often encountered by youth and their families. The Wraparound approach seeks to provide more extensive and proactive contact between the youth, his or her family, and other involved parties (e.g., court counsellor, social worker, etc.). Wraparound is focused on providing a continuum of services and support networks with case management coordination. Wraparound uses a variety of established interventions, including: skills training; cognitive problem solving skills; self-control strategies; family management skills training; and parent training to name only a few. Wraparound strategies work with young people and their families to develop a system of care tailored to each individual participant. A focus on individualized and needs-based care can ensure that the necessary services are identified and accessed to meet the unique needs of each participant (Snider et al., n.d.).

Key Implementation Components

- A collaborative, community-based interagency team designs, implements, and oversees the project. Professionals from at least three of the following partners should be involved: child welfare services, mental health services, substance abuse services, family services, police, school, youth justice system, employment program, community organization (recreational, youth centre). One organization takes the lead in coordinating each individual Wraparound case.

- A formal interagency agreement sets out who the target population for the initiative is; how they will be enrolled in the program; how services will be delivered and paid for; what roles different agencies and individuals will play; and what resources will be committed by various groups. This is commonly referred to as a 'system of care'.

- Care coordinators who are responsible for helping participants create a customized treatment program for guiding youth and their families through the system of care. Care coordinators are usually employees of the lead agency. The care coordinator ensures the mobilization of partners, supervisions and support of workers, and overall project coordination.

- Child and family teams (comprised of family members, paid service providers, and community members such as teachers and mentors) are created for each participant in the program. This team is a group of people – chosen in consultation with the family and connected to them through natural, community, and formal support relationships – who know the youth and his/her complex needs and work in partnership to ensure that the young person's needs in all life domains are addressed with cultural competence. This team develops and implements the plan of care.

- There is an assessment of needs and development of a youth driven comprehensive plan of care, which is updated continually. This plan of care identifies the young person's unique strengths and weaknesses across domains, targets specific goals and proposes action plans. The plan of care addresses the roles of individual team members (young person and family included) in helping achieve the goals.

- To achieve the goal laid out in the Wraparound plan of care, the team develops and implements a customized set of strategies, supports and services based upon availability and existing resources, such as employment support, pro-social activities (sport, music, etc.), school support, personal development (theme-based workshops, self-esteem). The care coordinator assesses the youth and develops and implements each person's intervention plan. This person is trained to coordinate the Wraparound process for a family.

Canadian Implementation Sites Funded by Public Safety Canada

From 2007 to 2019, 16 organizations across Canada will have been supported through the YGPF to implement a project based on the Wraparound approach. As of 2018, six organizations are still implementing a local project based on the Wraparound approach. The projects listed below could have either implemented Wraparound solely or in combination with other key effective interventions, resulting in a 'hybrid program'. For more information about the completed projects and the results achieved, please consult the Evaluation Summaries and the Crime Prevention in Action publications available on Public Safety Canada's website.

Table 1: Wraparound Projects Funded through the National Crime Prevention Strategy in Canada (2007-2019)

Provinces and Territories	Funded Projects	Program Implementation Status	Evaluation Status
British Columbia	Project: Changing Direction in Support of Aboriginal Youth Recipient: Native Courtwork & Counselling Association of British Columbia	In progress (2013-2018)	Process and outcome evaluation in progress
	Project: Abbotsford Youth Crime Prevention Project Recipient: Abbotsford Community Services	Completed (2009-2014)	Process and outcome evaluation completed
	Project: Wraparound Surrey: A Youth Driven Plan for Gang Violence Prevention Recipient: School District #36	Completed (2008-2013)	Process and outcome evaluation completed
Alberta	Project: Identity-based intervention: Preventing Criminal Gang Involvement of Youth from Immigrant Families Recipient: University of Calgary – Faculty of Social Work	In progress (2013-2019)	Process and outcome evaluation in progress
	Project: WrapEd Recipient: REACH Edmonton Council	In progress (2013-2018)	Process and outcome evaluation in progress
	Project: Youth At Risk Development (YARD)	Completed (2008-2011)	Process and outcome

Provinces and Territories	Funded Projects	Program Implementation Status	Evaluation Status
	Recipient: Calgary Police Service		evaluation completed
Saskatchewan	Project: Regina Anti-Gang Services (RAGS) Recipient: North Central Community Association	Completed (2007-2012)	Process and outcome evaluation completed
Manitoba	Project: Youth Leading in a Good Way – Oshkiiwaadizag Mino Niigaaniiwad Recipient: West Region Child and Family Services Inc.	In progress (2013-2018)	Process and outcome evaluation in progress
	Project: Winnipeg YGPF Projects – Project OASIS Recipient: New Directions	Completed (2007-2012)	Process and outcome evaluation completed
Ontario	Project: Gang Prevention Strategy Recipient: Living Rock Ministries	Completed (2007-2011)	Process and outcome evaluation completed
	Project: Positive Alternative to Youth Gangs (PAYG) Recipient: San Romanoway Revitalization Association	Completed (2007-2011)	Process and outcome evaluation completed
	Project: Youth and Adult Anti-Gang Program (YOS) Recipient: Niagara Citizens Advisory Committee Inc.	Completed (2007-2011)	Process and outcome evaluation completed
Quebec	Project : Solutions de rechange et acquisitions de compétences pour les 12-24 ans Recipient : Maison des jeunes par la Grand'Porte	In progress (2013-2018)	Process and outcome evaluation in progress
Nova Scotia	Project: Souls Strong Project Applicant: Halifax Regional Municipality Community and Recreational Services – Halifax Regional Municipality	In progress (2013-2018)	Process and outcome evaluation in progress
	Project: Youth Advocate Program (YAP) Recipient: Halifax Regional Municipality	Completed (2007-2012)	Process and outcome evaluation completed

Lessons Learned from Wraparound Experiences

Evaluations suggest a number of lessons learned from the development and implementation phases of the Wraparound approach (Debicki, 2011; Kamradt, 2010; Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013). These include:

- The importance of developing a comprehensive map of community assets;
- The importance of setting realistic expectations for the project;
- The importance of practicing Wraparound and ensuring that service providers understand what this entails;
- Getting access to services in a timely fashion requires relationship-building and persistence;
- A strong system of partnerships is necessary to implement the Wraparound process effectively;
- The community and the partners must work together towards a common goal with each child, youth, adult and their family;
- Facilitators require good clinical teaching or coaching so that they are implementing the model faithfully and effectively; and
- Children, youth, adults and their families must be connected to community groups to help them re-establish positive social networks so they can rebuild a supportive safety net.

When the process and outcome evaluations of the current Wraparound projects are completed, new lessons learned and results will be disseminated and published.

For More Information

Please visit the Wrap Canada **website** or refer to the Resource Guide to Wraparound available on the National Wraparound Initiative **website**.

Gang Reduction Program (Grp)

Theoretical Framework

The Gang Reduction Program (GRP) was launched in 2003 by the U.S. National Gang Center based on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Comprehensive Gang Model. The GRP is a comprehensive, integrated, multifaceted and coordinated approach that outlines the importance of addressing the needs of individual youth and making changes in the families, organizations, and communities. The GRP concentrates on assessing the needs of youth and providing them with individualized support services and suppression by involving their families, local organizations, and their communities (Cahill & Hayslip, 2010). The main goals of the GRP are to: gain a better understanding of the gang problems at the local level through the local plan and identification of needs and resources; mobilize/reach the involvement of several stakeholders in order to provide a coordinated response and build stronger local partnerships; and reduce youth gang crime and violence through a combination of primary prevention, secondary prevention, intervention, suppression and re-entry activities and programs.

Key Implementation Components

The GRP consists of five core strategies which originate from integrated and team-oriented problem solving. The fundamental basis of the GRP is that a lack of social opportunities and the degree of social disorganization in a community contribute the youth gang problem. Factors such as poverty, institutional racism, poor social policies, and a lack of or misdirected social controls are important. The core strategies, equally important and to be implemented concurrently, are as follows:

- Community mobilization – involving the community in responding to the gang problem.

- Social intervention – addressing social deficits and issues, such as mental health issues, family dysfunction, substance abuse, and other factors that will diminish a gang member's ability to disengage from the gang.
- Opportunities provision – engaging gang members in educational and employment opportunities.
- Gang suppression – reducing the ability of gangs to cause harm to the community.
- Organizational change and development – improving the ability of organizations and agencies to respond to gangs.

The GRP has been shown to offer a reduction in serious gang-related crimes in gang-affected communities. This approach is, at its essence, a flexible framework that communities can use to plan a comprehensive solution to gang crime.

Canadian Implementation Sites Funded by Public Safety Canada

From 2007 to 2019, ten organizations across Canada will have been supported through the YGPF to implement a project based on the GRP. As of 2018, three organizations are still implementing a local project based on the GRP. The projects listed below could have either implemented GRP solely or in combination with other key effective interventions, resulting in a 'hybrid program'. For more information about the completed projects and the results achieved, please consult the Evaluation Summaries and the Crime Prevention in Action publications available on Public Safety Canada's website.

Table 2: GRP Projects Funded through the National Crime Prevention Strategy in Canada (2007-2020)

Provinces and Territories	Funded Projects	Program Implementation Status	Evaluation Status
British Columbia	Project: Surrey Gang Reduction Program Recipient: The Board of Education of School District #36	In progress (2015-2020)	Process and outcome evaluation in progress
	Project: Abbotsford Comprehensive Community Action for Gang Reduction Project Recipient: Abbotsford Community Services	In progress (2013-2018)	Process and outcome evaluation in progress
Alberta	Project: Effective Community Response to Immigrant Youth Gang Crime Project Recipient: Centre for Newcomers	Completed (2009-2013)	Only process evaluation completed
Manitoba	Project: Winnipeg YGPF Projects - Just TV Recipient: Broadway Neighbourhood Centre	Completed (2007-2012)	Process and outcome evaluation completed
	Project: Winnipeg YGPF Projects - Project OASIS Recipient: New Directions	Completed (2007-2012)	Process and outcome evaluation completed
	Project: Winnipeg YGPF Projects - Turning the Tides Recipient: Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad Inc. - Ndinawe	Completed (2007-2012)	Process and outcome evaluation completed
Ontario	Project: Youth At Risk Development (YARD Hamilton) Recipient: John Howard Society of Hamilton, Burlington and Area	In progress (2013-2018)	Process and outcome evaluation in progress
	Project: My Regent Park Recipient: Dixon Hall	Completed (2009-2013)	Only process evaluation completed
	Project: Waterloo Regional Gang Prevention Project Recipient: Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Social Services, Social Planning, Policy and Program Administration	Completed (2009-2013)	Only process evaluation completed
	Project: Durham Youth Gang Strategy (DYGS)	Completed (2007-2012)	Process and outcome

Provinces and Territories	Funded Projects	Program Implementation Status	Evaluation Status
	Recipient: Durham Family Court Clinic and the Murray McKinnon Foundation		evaluation completed

Lessons Learned from GRP Experiences

Evaluations suggest a number of lessons learned from the development and implementation phases of GRP projects (Cahill & Hayeslip, 2010). These include:

- Strong leadership of a site coordinator, close oversight by the National Gang Centre/OJJDP during the strategic planning and implementation phases, and the availability of technical assistance contributed to implementation progress at the sites;
- The lead organization should ensure proper analysis of community needs and knowledge of existing services, resources, and organizations available to youth at risk of gang involvement; and
- Implementation sites should be in a position to demonstrate a sufficient level of readiness.

When the process and outcome evaluations of the current GRP projects are completed, new lessons learned and results will be disseminated and published.

For More Information

Please visit the National Gang Center **website**.

Youth Violence Reduction Partnership (YVRP)

Theoretical Framework

The Youth Violence Reduction Partnership (YVRP) – also known as the Philadelphia Youth Violence Reduction Partnership – was first launched by Philadelphia youth-service agencies and criminal justice agencies in 1999. The YVRP is a program aimed at members of street gangs in police precincts with the highest homicide rates among young people. The program's main goals are to reduce violent crime (particularly homicide) committed by or against young people and to promote social reintegration.

This program is a result of the close partnership between various public agencies (i.e., police, probation) and community organizations (i.e., street workers, religious organizations) working with the client group. Youth-serving organizations and criminal justice agencies collaborate to balance intensive supervision with comprehensive therapeutic support. Youth are provided with increased supervision to help them access important resources (e.g., employment, mentoring, school bonding, counselling, health care and drug treatment). The program also seeks to stabilize the families of participants through efforts such as jobs for parents and housing assistance.

Key Implementation Components

- Surveillance – Joint police-parole officers maintain close surveillance of the youth's activities to ensure that they obey the conditions of their release. This surveillance is meant to show youth that they are more likely to be punished for their crimes and that any violation or breach of the conditions of their probation will be penalized; and
- Measures to facilitate social reintegration – Community outreach workers develop a meaningful rapport with the youth and guide them toward resources to help them get off the streets. The YVRP provides participants with

resources such as mentoring, healthcare, drug treatment, career counselling, and employment assistance. These community outreach workers also help the parents of the youth find jobs, housing, and healthcare.

Canadian Implementation Sites Funded by Public Safety Canada

Between 2007 and 2020, six organizations across Canada will have been supported through the YGPF to implement a project based on the YVRP. As of 2018, two organizations are still implementing a local project based on the YVRP. The projects listed below could have either implemented the YVRP solely or in combination with other key effective interventions, resulting in a 'hybrid program'. For more information about the completed projects and the results achieved, please consult the Evaluation Summaries and the Crime Prevention in Action publications available on Public Safety Canada's website.

Table 3: YVRP Projects Funded through the National Crime Prevention Strategy in Canada (2007-2021)

Provinces and Territories	Funded Projects	Program Implementation Status	Evaluation Status
Saskatchewan	Project: Northern Integration Initiative Recipient: Government of Saskatchewan – Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing	In progress (2015-2020)	Process and outcome evaluation in progress
Manitoba	Project: Winnipeg YGPF Projects - Just TV Recipient: Broadway Neighbourhood Centre	Completed (2007-2012)	Process and outcome evaluation completed
	Project : Winnipeg YGPF Projects – West Central Youth Outreach Recipient: Spence Neighbourhood Association and West Central Women's Resource Centre	Completed (2007-2011)	Process and outcome evaluation completed
Ontario	Project: Positive Alternative to Youth Gangs (PAYG) Recipient: San Romanoway Revitalization Association	Completed (2007-2011)	Process and outcome evaluation completed
	Project : Taking Action Against Gang Scarborough (TAAGS) Recipient: Agincourt Community Services Association	In progress (2013-2019)	Process and outcome evaluation in progress
Quebec	Project : Programme de suivi intensif de Montréal – Gangs de rue Recipient: Centre jeunesse de Montréal – Institut universitaire	Completed (2007-2011)	Process and outcome evaluation completed

Lessons Learned from the YVRP Experiences

Evaluations suggest a number of lessons learned from the development and implementation phases of YVRP projects (Lafortune et al., 2016; Wortley, 2011):

- A smaller staff-to-student ratio would ensure better service delivery and increase the effectiveness of counselling (including more one-on-one sessions).
- The necessity of engaging families in support of youth is critical. Like approaches to youth, supports to families should be individualized, strength-based, flexible, and based on trust.
- When possible, youth should be consulted in program planning, implementation and knowledge dissemination.
- Admitting youth that are not at-risk or are 'too low' of a risk will result in a trend that may erroneously conclude that the project was ineffective.
- Projects seeking to support gang-involved or at-risk youth should allow for the customization of interventions based on needs. Flexibility in approaches is a key factor.

For More Information

Please visit the National Gang Center **website**.

Circle of Courage®

Theoretical Framework

The Circle of Courage® is a model of positive youth development and empowerment that integrates Indigenous philosophies of child rearing, the heritage of education and youth work, and contemporary resilience research and was developed by Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve Van Bockern.[2] The Circle of Courage® model has been applied world-wide in schools, treatment settings, and family and youth development programs.

Key Implementation Components

- This approach is graphically represented by a circle – the medicine wheel – that is divided into quadrants which correspond to the four core values: belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. While the four dimensions of the Circle of Courage® can be described individually, they must be viewed as one.
- This approach emphasizes the importance of having a comprehensive and holistic approach, where family, school and community members are involved together.
- The central theme of this approach is that a set of shared values must exist in any community to create environments that ultimately benefit all.

The Circle of Courage® model allows for some flexibility in the way it is implemented and adapted to fit local needs, resources and specific crime issues. Indeed, Circle of Courage® is not a 'one size fits all' nor a manualized program; rather it should be envisioned as a general crime prevention approach. The crime issues and risk factors addressed by this model are variable depending on the context in which it is implemented; youth gangs/gang related activities have been addressed in certain implementation sites.

---

[2] For more information, see Brendo, L., Bockern, S., & Brokenleg, M. (2002). *Reclaiming youth at risk: Our hope for the future*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Canadian Implementation Sites funded by Public Safety Canada

Between 2007 and 2012, three organizations across Canada were supported through the YGPF to implement a project based on the Circle of Courage®. The projects listed below have implemented the Circle of Courage® model in combination with other key effective interventions, resulting in a 'hybrid program'. For more information about the completed projects and the results achieved, please consult the Evaluation Summaries and the Crime Prevention in Action publications available on Public Safety Canada's website.

Table 4: Circle of Courage® Projects Funded through the National Crime Prevention Strategy in Canada (2007-2012)

Provinces and Territories	Funded Projects	Program Implementation Status	Evaluation Status
Saskatchewan	Project: Regina Anti-Gang Services (RAGS) Recipient: North Central Community Association Regina Anti-Gang Services	Completed (2007-2012)	Process and outcome evaluation completed
	Project: Youth Alliance Against Gang Violence (YAAGV) (also known as the Warrior Spirit Walking Program) Recipient: PA Outreach Program Inc.	Completed (2007-2012)	Process and outcome evaluation completed
Manitoba	Project: Winnipeg YGPF Project - Circle of Courage® Recipient: Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc.	Completed (2007-2011)	Process and outcome evaluation completed

Lessons Learned of Canadian Circle of Courage® Experiences

Unfortunately, at this time there have not been any Canadian evaluation studies conducted that have explicitly examined the development and implementation phases of the Circle of Courage® model on its own. More process and outcome evaluations are required in order to develop the Canadian knowledge-base on this model.

For More Information

Please visit the Circle of Courage® – Reclaiming Youth website.

Option 2 – Implementing Customized Interventions

Applicants can decide to implement **two** or more interventions that have demonstrated sound results, in order to build a customized approach to addressing youth gangs and youth violence, while taking into account their specific context, available resources and community capacities. Several interventions have demonstrated positive results for youth at-risk of gang involvement and those individuals already involved in gangs, as highlighted in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Youth Gang Program Interventions with Favourable Impacts

Contribution to Favourable Change in Attitudes	Contribution to Favourable Change in Risk and Protective Factors	Contribution to Favourable Change in Behaviours
Awareness raising activities related to gang risks and recruitment	Awareness raising activities related to gang risks and recruitment	Awareness raising activities related to gang risks and recruitment
Case management	Case management	Case management
Counselling	Counselling	Counselling
Drugs, alcohol and/or addictions education	Drugs, alcohol and/or addictions education	Drugs, alcohol and/or addictions education
Employment training and/or support	Employment training and/or support	Employment training and/or support
		Healthy relationships (with peers)
Learning and education training		
Life management and decision-making (life skills)	Life management and decision-making (life skills)	
**Arts (music and crafts)	**Arts (music and crafts)	
**Cultural activities and community service learning	**Cultural activities and community service learning	**Cultural activities and community service learning
		**Sporting / recreation activities

The information included in this table is from a report prepared by Public Safety Canada that summarized the impact of ten youth gang projects funded under the Youth Gang Prevention Fund (YGPF) between 2007 and 2012.[3] As shown above, the report found several interventions that contributed to favourable impacts on participants' attitudes, risk and protective factors, and behaviours. In order for the interventions to be included in the table, the favourable change needed to be observed in at least 60% of the evaluation studies.[4] It should be noted that the dosage (i.e. hours, weeks, sessions) for the interventions was not reported in the individual evaluation studies making it challenging to assess the amount required to effect a change in the participant's attitudes, risk and protective factors, and/or behaviours (Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013).

The list of interventions included on the following pages only contains some examples, and it is not intended to be exhaustive. Therefore, applicants can propose an approach that includes interventions that are not listed here. Not all interventions are similarly suited to respond to all youth gang or youth violence problems. Choosing the appropriate interventions will depend on the characteristics of the problems identified and the specific risk/protective factors targeted, as well as other factors such

[3] The report *Youth Gang Prevention Fund Projects: What Did We Learn About What Works in Preventing Gang Involvement?* is available on Public Safety Canada's website.

[4] Interventions that demonstrated favourable change in less than 20% of the youth gang projects included: (1) advocacy on behalf of youth; (2) therapy with a psychologist; (3) attending the complementary amusement activities (i.e., theatre); (4) unpaid intern programs; and (5) financial literacy activities. The latter were less likely to contribute to favourable change and were challenging to measure. In particular, it should be noted that interventions such as internships and seeing a psychologist are challenging to measure especially given the difficulty in data collection.

as: availability of local resources, capacity to train people to deliver a given initiative, and/or the partnerships required to deliver the initiatives. The project can intervene at the individual level, at the community level, or both.

Awareness Raising Activities Related To Gang Risks and Recruitment

This type of intervention seeks to raise awareness about the realities of youth gangs and attempts to reduce gang membership and limit the effectiveness of gang recruitment strategies. Common approaches include activities that build prosocial attitudes towards law enforcement and encourage less positive attitudes towards gangs, promote the use of former gang members as teachers, and provide educational workshops on gang exit strategies. This type of intervention is suited to communities where there is intergenerational involvement in gangs, association with gang involved peers, and multiple out-of-home placements in child welfare or correctional facilities. Seventy percent (70%) of projects supported through the YGPF between 2007 and 2012 included this type of intervention.

Case Management

Case management is a process where trained staff work with at-risk and/or gang-involved youth to create a tailored curriculum and social support plan. This collaboration acknowledges the risk and protective factors of the young person (and their families) and connects them to the services that they would most benefit from, and typically includes the monitoring of the participant's progress, and reassessing and modifying service delivery to ensure the intervention matches the developmental progress of the individual. Service provision from case management can include, but is not limited to, addictions counselling, employment programs, education programs, and leadership workshops. Case management is very flexible in that it can help youth with most individual and social risk factors and characteristics; however collaboration and problem-solving partnerships in the community are required for effective practice. Eighty percent (80%) of projects supported through the YGPF between 2007 and 2012 included this type of intervention.

Counselling

Counselling is a broad term used to define the practice of providing psychological help and advice to at-risk and/or gang-involved youth. Counselling interventions support wellness and prosocial growth in participants while addressing the inherent issues in their cognition and behaviour. Many different branches of counselling can be used as intervention strategies to help program participants with issues related to risk factors, including individual counselling, family counselling, addictions counselling, cognitive-behavioral therapy, etc. Counselling can help address criminal risk factors in youth such as intergenerational trauma, mental illness, impulsivity, self-esteem issues, developmental impairments, and anger, among others. Eighty percent (80%) of projects supported through the YGPF between 2007 and 2012 included this type of intervention.

Drugs, Alcohol and/or Addictions Education

Drug, alcohol and/or addictions education is a type of intervention designed to reduce the damage caused by alcohol and other drug dependencies and teach at-risk and/or gang-involved youth the harms caused by these substances. This type of intervention is also important in providing youth the skills needed to resist the appeal of both licit and illicit substances. Drugs, alcohol and/or addictions education should be administered in communities in which substance abuse is a common risk factor. Seventy percent (70%) of projects supported through the YGPF between 2007 and 2012 included this type of intervention.

Employment Training and/or Support

Providing employment training and/or support to at-risk and/or gang-involved youth encompasses all activities that help young people to improve their employment potential. Specific employment training activities can include improving attitudes towards employment, providing assistance in preparing resumes, interview training, job search, and on-the-job coaching. Vocational training and support is important for communities in which poverty and youth lacking the skills necessary for employability are prevalent risk factors. Eighty percent (80%) of projects supported through the YGPF between 2007 and 2012 included this type of intervention.

Family Supports

Family supports focus on enhancing family life and providing key family support services to mitigate risk factors. Other interventions such as counselling and case management will also address issues at home, emphasizing the importance of this type of intervention. Typical family-level interventions include family therapy, parent coaching, parent support services, and family bonding activities to improve communication. Family support programs are best suited to communities where families are responding to stresses with verbal abuse, poor supervision, a lack of bonding, and where family members are gang-affiliated. Eighty percent (80%) of projects supported through the YGPF between 2007 and 2012 included this type of intervention.

Healthy Relationships

This type of intervention helps at-risk and/or gang-involved youth build positive relationships with prosocial peers and, at the same time, discourages relationships with antisocial peers and gang-involved youth. In delivering this type of intervention, the importance of positive interactions with peers is emphasized. Examples of activities which promote healthy relationships with peers include team building exercises, recreational sports leagues, parenting classes, and increasing awareness of the effects of negative relationships. Supporting positive interactions with prosocial peers is important for youth in communities with gang-involved peers and communities where there is intergenerational involvement in gangs. Sixty percent (60%) of projects supported through the YGPF between 2007 and 2012 included this type of intervention.

Learning and Education Training

Learning and education training encompasses all activities that help promote school attachment, literacy, academic skills and achievement. Programs incorporating these activities have been implemented in school curricula, after-school programs, and community based initiatives, among others. Typical learning and education training activities include helping with homework, developing reading skills, and exploring opportunities for post-secondary education and beyond. This type of intervention can be incorporated in programs to help youth who have limited educational attainment and a lack of connection to school. Seventy percent (70%) of projects supported through the YGPF between 2007 and 2012 included this type of intervention.

Life Management and Decision Making (Life Skills)

Life skills such as life management and decision making are of particular importance for at-risk and/or gang-involved youth; these skills help equip young people with the tools needed to develop psycho-socially, increase resilience, build positive relationships, and lead healthier lives. These skills are promoted through training sessions, activities, and classroom-based education in order to create resiliency in youth. Other examples of life skills, aside from life management and decision making, include leadership, time management, conflict resolution, and problem solving. Learning life management, decision making, and other life skills is significant for communities in which poor conflict resolution and impulsivity are identified as issues for youth. Seventy percent (70%) of projects supported through the YGPF between 2007 and 2012 included this type of intervention.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a term used to define a trusting relationship in which one individual (a mentor) provides support, encouragement, and general help to another individual (a mentee). This relationship is oriented towards providing at-risk and/or gang-involved youth support and promoting prosocial development and positive alternatives to negative behaviours and thinking. Mentoring interventions include activities such as demonstrating and coaching life skills, tutoring, active listening, providing advice, and managing crises. Mentoring is a very individualized intervention, and can be tailored to communities based on a range of issues, including school attachment, substance abuse, and neglect. Sixty-percent (60%) of projects supported through the YGPF between 2007 and 2012 included this type of intervention.

NOTE: The interventions listed below (and denoted with **) should be combined with at least one of the other options listed above that specifically target identified risk(s) related to gang involvement and youth violence.

**Arts (Music and Crafts)

This type of intervention is used to engage at-risk and/or gang-involved youth through prosocial activities while providing them with skills and cultural belonging that can address risk factors and build protective factors to help in their development. Arts can also be used to reduce the stigma attached to participation in gang or violence prevention programming and increase the willingness of youth to become involved in these initiatives. Some examples of arts-based activities include making movies, drum making, music, and drama activities. This type of intervention is important for communities where there is a loss of identity and culture. Ninety percent (90%) of projects supported through the YGPF between 2007 and 2012 included this type of intervention.

**Cultural Activities and Community Service Learning

This type of intervention is used in youth gang prevention programs to help participants recognize the importance of pride in heritage, history, culture, and belonging. Cultural activities and community service learning initiatives can include, but are not limited to, storytelling, crafts, sweat lodges, circles, drumming, and volunteering. This is an important type of intervention for communities in which there is a loss of identity, culture, bigotry and sexism, or hyper-masculinity/femininity. Seventy percent (70%) of projects supported through the YGPF between 2007 and 2012 included this type of intervention.

**Sporting / Recreation Activities

This type of intervention has been paired with other interventions such as core case management and life skills development to promote prosocial development and physical activity among at-risk and/or gang-involved youth. These types of activities are used to attract participation in gang and violence prevention and intervention initiatives, and at the same time, offer additional benefits (exercise, building life skills, etc.) Examples of activities which have been paired with core case management and life skill development interventions include pick-up basketball games, wilderness treks, dance competitions, etc. This type of intervention is most likely to be successful if it is paired with case management that addresses participants' risk and protective factors. Communities can select the activities that would best suit the interests of participating youth. Seventy percent (70%) of projects supported through the YGPF between 2007 and 2012 included this type of intervention.

Part III: Considerations for Developing a Strong Project

The following are some suggestions of things to consider in the development of a strong project to address youth gangs and youth violence. The areas of consideration listed below are based on empirical evidence and lessons learned from past implementation and evaluation experiences.

Assessment Of The Youth Gang Problem

Challenges

Past evaluations have demonstrated that communities who did not complete a community assessment and clearly identify the problem to be addressed had difficulty mobilizing the community and experienced implementation difficulties. An assessment of the problem is a critical step for planning interventions; conducting an assessment helps in the strategic planning of the project that is to be developed.

Strategies

To help communities understand and define their unique gang situation, an assessment should answer the following questions (inspired by Howell, 2010):

- Who are the individuals involved in gangs and youth violence and what are their risk/protective factors?
- Who are at the greatest risk of joining gangs and what are their risk/protective factors?
- What is the history of these gangs in the community?
- What crimes are committed by these gangs, when, where ('hot spots') and why?
- What services (direct or related) are currently available to address the problem in the community and where are there gaps?

A community assessment provides an understanding of who is involved in gang-related crime or violence, the level and extent of the problem, where these activities are concentrated in the community as well as contributing factors within the community (Howell, 2010). Information collected throughout the assessment process can then help each community to define their specific gang and/or violence problems.[5]

At the individual level, it is also important to have a sense of the risk and protective factors of each participant (individual/family/peer/school/community). In doing so, a validated risk assessment tool should be used.[6]

Partnerships

Challenges

Collaboration between partners is essential to the implementation and success of youth gang and youth violence programs, but sometimes the terms of engagements, roles and responsibilities, and duration of involvement are not clearly defined which can affect partnerships and partner(s) involvement.

---

[5] An example of a comprehensive community assessment tool is the *A Guide to Assessing Your Community's Youth Gang Problem* that was published by the National Gang Center. For more information on the community assessment tool, consult the National Gang Center's website.

[6] For examples of risk assessment tools, consult *Tools to Identify and Assess the Risk of Offending Among Youth* available on Public Safety Canada's website.

Strategies

To be effective, partnerships should include representation from several groups such as: schools; social, health and mental health services agencies; local units of government; employment agencies; community residents; and other local agencies/organizations involved in housing, parks and recreation, economic development, faith-based organizations, etc. This group of partners (that can be called the steering committee, board committee, advisory group), has multiple roles and responsibilities.[7]

To collaborate fully with partners, organizations must form alliances and adopt an approach that brings together various stakeholders based on shared goals and an established infrastructure that supports project interventions. Independent of the type and nature of partnership, the clarification of the role and responsibilities of each partner at each different phase of the implementation is important to ensure cohesion and participation.

Implementing the Program with Fidelity

Challenges

The amount of service (dosage) that is provided to participants in youth gang and youth violence projects is an important factor that contributes to change in the outcomes being measured. Some already established programs have program developers that prescribe the dosage levels needed to affect a change. When this is the case, it is important to replicate the program with fidelity. However, those applicants that implement a customized project based on selected interventions may find it more difficult determine proper dosage as the amount of services delivered per youth and project duration will not be prescribed. Based on the projects supported through the YGPF between 2007 and 2012, the average number of program hours per participant was 233 and the projects were an average of 39 weeks in duration (Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013).

Strategies

To determine the appropriate dosage and to identify the risk factors domains and levels specific to each participant in the project, a validated risk assessment tool has to be used.[8] A risk assessment tool is used to identify factors that can be changed through individualized treatment or programming (as well as protective factors and strengths in a young person's life) and guide decisions concerning the nature of the services required and the intensity depending on the level of risk (low, moderate or high) (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012).

Although there are numerous advantages of using a validated risk assessment tool, there are some limitations that applicants should keep in mind; most of the tools have been validated with Caucasian male offenders and have been validated within the justice system. Tools that consider the specificity of risk factors for girls and women, for the Indigenous population as well as for visible minorities are limited, especially when used in a community-based context.

Reaching the Appropriate Clientele and Delivering the Appropriate Interventions

Challenges

Identifying and recruiting youth who are suited for youth gang and youth violence projects is difficult. The clientele needs to be well-defined (gang activity varies by age, degree of gang involvement and severity of offending). Initiatives must consider the clientele they are targeting to ensure that proper supports and services are provided.

Solutions

Once again, using a risk assessment tool would help project staff recruit the most appropriate clientele for the project. Those that are at highest risk are more likely to benefit from youth gang and youth violence projects. Projects supported through the YGPF between 2007 and 2012 showed that those that were able to attract higher-risk youth had greater reductions in key risk

---

[7] For more information on partnerships, consult the partnership information available on Public Safety Canada's website.

[8] For examples of risk assessment tools, consult *Tools to Identify and Assess the Risk of Offending Among Youth* available on Public Safety Canada's website.

factors and behaviours, including gang involvement and non-violent offending (Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013). The three groups presented below may help applicants to identity and better understand the targeted clientele for their projects:

- Serious, chronic, and violent gang offenders (these individuals should be targeted for gang enforcement / suppression) – These gang offenders make up a relatively small proportion of the population, but commit a disproportionately large amount of illegal activities. Because of their high level of involvement in crime and violence, targeted enforcement, suppression and prosecution are used.

- Gang-involved youth and their associates (these individuals should be targeted for intervention) – These youth are involved in significant levels of illegal activities but are not necessarily in the highest offending category in comparison to the previous group. These youth typically range from 12 to 24 years old and youth in this group are candidates for intensive treatment services. Examples of services that can be offered include, but are not limited to: individual/group therapy, family therapy, mental health counselling, mentoring, drug treatment, outreach, case management, service referrals, and cognitive-behavioural therapy. The level of intervention can be as high as 40 hours of direct contact over a 130-day period (Howell, 2010).[9] The goal is to facilitate gang exit and provide ongoing support for youth to stay away.

- High-risk youth who are not yet gang-involved (these individuals should be targeted for prevention) – These youth have already displayed early signs of problem behaviours and are at high-risk for gang involvement but are not yet gang involved. These youth typically range from 7 to 14 years old and they represent a pool of candidates for future gang membership. In addition, younger siblings and family members are particularly suitable to receive assistance. Youth in this group can receive some form of individual assessment, family support and similar services provided to youth already involved in a gang. Because these youth are not yet gang members, the goal is to decrease the likelihood of them joining a gang by providing attractive alternatives and accessible social opportunities to divert them from the gang lifestyle.

Using a risk assessment tool would help to situate individuals across these three categories and to plan the intensity / duration of the interventions accordingly.

Culturally-Based Prevention and Intervention Strategies

Challenges

Indigenous and immigrant communities are faced with a multitude of risk factors, meaning that youth gang and youth violence projects must be able to attend to a number of pragmatic issues such as provision of food, childcare, transportation and literacy issues in addition to trying to implement an evidence-based approach with fidelity. Previous program evaluations have reported the difficulties in securing the trust and participation of eligible families. Furthermore, these evaluations have stressed the importance of implementing strategies tailored to the situational realities of these communities, including isolation and remoteness, political and economic realities, health determinants, language and cultural barriers, and resource limitations.

Solutions

The following key elements have been drawn from promising crime prevention approaches in northern and Indigenous communities:

- Cultural relevance – It is important that program activities and processes are interactive and are respectful and sensitive to traditional, Indigenous values. Practices such as learning from the natural world, spiritual awareness, mentorship, and focusing on visual and audio learning styles have been noted as successful elements in initiatives

[9] 40 hours of direct contact over a 130-day period represents approximately 3 hours of contact per day, which represents almost 15 hours of direct contact during a 5-day work week.

involving Indigenous youth. Participants almost always speak favourably about opportunities to sing, drum, attend sweat lodges and round dances, and be involved in other traditional activities.

- Values-based approach – In addition to cultural relevance, promising approaches also take into account the social and economic realities of Indigenous communities such as housing, poverty, addiction, mental and emotional health, community capacity, and literacy among others; these needs should be accounted when tailoring intervention strategies for at-risk youth in these communities. The high demand for accompanying services also accentuates the importance of ensuring community trust, buy-in and partnerships to maximize local resources and the chances for success.

With regard to immigrant youth, Ngo (2010) recommends the following principles to guide the development of programs and services for this population:

- Integration of empowering identity development – Initiatives should outline clear strategies to promote positive self-concept, Canadian identity and ethnic identity.
- Promote equity – Stakeholders should address equity in resource allocation and availability of services, support and opportunities that in turn ensure equitable outcomes of wellbeing and success of youth from immigrant families.
- Multi-stakeholder involvement, coordination and collaboration – Multiple individuals and organizations working together can increase resource and professional expertise, and ensure both specialized support for specific needs and development of the youth.
- Multiple approaches to youth services – In response to the complex life experiences and needs of high-risk and gang-involved youth from immigrant families, stakeholders should be attentive to the multiple layers of needs and corresponding initiatives required to address the complex issue.
- Timelines and responsiveness – Initiatives should be swift and respond to the needs of at-risk and gang-involved youth who are dealing with competing social pressures, demands and influences.

In addition, to help facilitate any adaptations of projects required to better suit local contexts, cultures, and concerns, applicants can refer to *Local Adaptations of Crime Prevention Programs: A Toolkit*. This publication offers a practical guide on how to modify programs to enhance their local and cultural acceptability, while maintaining the effectiveness of the program (see also Bania, Roebuck, & Chase, 2017; Bania, Roebuck, O'Halloran, & Chase 2017).[10]

Gender-Based Prevention and Intervention Strategies

Challenges

While many risk factors and reasons motivating young women to join gangs overlap with those of their male counterparts, there are also key differences. For this reason, prevention and intervention initiatives should include both gender-neutral (with a proven record of improving female as well as male outcomes) and gender-specific approaches and programs.

Solutions

Recent studies have outlined some key elements for effective gender-informed prevention and intervention strategies for young women (see Dunbar, 2017):

- They should be provided in a safe and nurturing environment (including single-sex space) favourable to therapeutic change.

---

[10] To receive copies of these resources, please contact the Research Division, Public Safety Canada at PS.CSCCBResearch-RechercheSSCRC.SP@canada.ca.

- They should include content which reflects both the risk factors and the realities of their daily lives: multi-disciplinary, comprehensive, holistic and solutions-focused approach to addressing the multiplicity of young women's risks, strengths and experiences (including physical and sexual health, practical difficulties, life skills, parenting support, experiences of victimization, aspirations, mental health/trauma, educational opportunities, preparation for work, substance reliance).

- They should promote self-esteem, healthy assertive behaviour and self-reliance to build resilience against future victimization and provide opportunities for empowerment, growth and explorations of identity.

- They should foster respectful and positive relationships as an important device for promoting change: facilitating association with alternative peer groups; and utilizing mentors, particularly women with similar experiences who can identify with and advise them.

- They should include work with families (especially the mother-daughter relationship) and engagement of other adults supporting the longer term resilience of these young women with attention to improving interaction and communication, providing structure and accountability, and facilitating opportunities.

- They should continue to combat the 'gang lore' spreading the ideas that the gang is a safe haven and that one cannot leave without serious consequences to self, family and/or friends.

Employing a Multidisciplinary Intervention Team

Challenges

Given the complexity of gang involvement and the importance of developing a comprehensive strategy to address the multiple needs of youth involved in gangs and those at high-risk of involvement, a multidisciplinary intervention team should be involved in the proposed project.

Solutions

The multidisciplinary intervention team is composed of professionals from several sectors and may include: youth-serving and grassroots agencies, schools, employment centers, law enforcement, justice agencies (juvenile and adult), mental health, and others (e.g., faith-based organizations, recreational programs, housing, etc.). The main roles of this team include but are not limited to:

- Reaching out and acting as links between gang-involved youth, their families, and needed services. Outreach workers play a key role to actively engage gang-involved youth and those at high-risk of gang involvement;

- Delivering targeted interventions and services to appropriate gang-involved clients and those that are at-high risk of gang involvement;

- Helping gang-involved clients leave gangs; and

- Facilitating changes within the community and between the organizations (increase collaboration and information shared; avoid duplication of services).

Establishing Relationships with Families

Challenges

Due to concerns with their families being 'associated' with gangs, parental involvement in youth gang and youth violence projects is often limited, reducing the opportunity for parents to reinforce the values and strategies conveyed by project staff. In addition, more often than not, parents of high-risk or gang-involved youth, in general, usually present with similar risk factors

of project participants, including: not being present in the youth's life; having limited support for 'child minding' which compromises their ability to engage in programing; and coping with substance abuse and other mental health issues (Smith-Moncrieffe, 2013). Furthermore, siblings with a criminal history, especially youth gang-involved siblings, often 'transmit' their patterns of behaviour to younger members of the family.

Solutions

In order to increase family participation in a project, the following practices have been identified:

- Providing 'child minding' services for parents during program delivery sessions;
- Using creative outreach activities that increase parent engagement;
- Refraining from using the term 'gang' in the outreach materials and instead using more general terms – the program seeks to increase prosocial activity and reduce the likelihood of youth becoming involved in the justice system or in criminal activity; and
- Using creative non-financial incentives to increase recruitment of parents.

References

Bania, M., Rocbuck, B., & Chase, V. (2017). *Local adaptations of crime prevention programs: Finding the optimal balance between fidelity and fit. Literature review*. Ottawa, ON: Public Safety Canada.

Bania, M., Rocbuck, B., O'Halloran, B., & Chase, V. (2017). *Local adaptations of crime prevention programs: Finding the optimal balance between fidelity and fit. Key effective elements of crime prevention programs*. Ottawa, ON: Public Safety Canada.

Cahill, M., & Hayeslip, D. (2010). Findings from the evaluation of OJJDP's Gang Reduction Program. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice.

Caldwell, C. H., Kohn-Wood, L. P., Schmeelk, K. H., Chavous, T. M., & Zimmerman, M. A. (2004). Racial discrimination and racial identity as risk or protective factors for violent behaviors in African American young adults. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 33*(1-2), 91-105.

Chettleburgh, M. C. (2007). *Young thugs: Inside the dangerous world of Canadian street gangs*. Toronto, ON: Harper Collins Publishers, Ltd.

Comack, E., Deane, L., Morrissette, L., & Silver, J. (2013). *Indians wear red: Colonialism, resistance, and Aboriginal street gangs*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood.

Debicki, A. (2011). *Making Canadian communities safe: One child and youth at a time. Good Wraparound projects in Canada: A review of NCPC projects*. Unpublished Report. Ottawa, ON: National Crime Prevention Centre.

Decker, S. H., Melde, C., & Pyrooz, D. C. (2013). What do we know about gangs and gang members and where do we go from here? *Justice Quarterly, 30*(3), 369-402.

Dorais, M., & Corriveau, P. (2009). *Gangs and girls: Understanding juvenile prostitution*. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Dunbar, L. (2017). *Youth gangs in Canada: A review of current topics and issues*. Ottawa, ON: Public Safety Canada.

Esbensen, F.-A., Peterson, D., Taylor, T. J., & Freng, A. (2010). *Youth violence: Sex and race differences in offending, victimization, and gang membership*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Goodwill, A. (2016). A critical incident technique study of the facilitation of gang entry: Perspectives of Indigenous men ex-gang members. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma, 25*(5), 518-536.

Grekul, J., & LaBoucane-Benson, P. (2008). Aboriginal gangs and their (dis)placement: Contextualizing recruitment, membership, and status. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice, 50*(1), 59-82.

Grekul, J., & LaRocque, P. (2011). "Hope is absolute": Gang-involved women – perceptions from the frontline. *Aboriginal Policy Studies, 1*(2), 132-160.

Hautala, D. S., Sittner, K. J., & Whitbeck, L. B. (2016). Prospective childhood risk factors for gang involvement among North American Indigenous adolescents. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, 14*, 390-410.

Higgins, G. E., Khey, D. N., Dawson-Edwards, C., & Marcum, C. D. (2012). Examining the link between being a victim of bullying and delinquency trajectories among an African American sample. *International Criminal Justice Review, 22*(2), 110-122.

Howell, J. C. (2010). Gang prevention: An overview of research and programs. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice.

Kamradt, B. (2010, April). Lessons learned from Wraparound Milwaukee: Has it been worth it? Presentation at 2010 Children's Behavioral Health Conference. Norman, OK.

Kanu, Y. (2008). Educational needs and barriers for African refugee students in Manitoba. *Canadian Journal of Education, 31*(4), 915-940.

Khenti, A. A. (2013). Homicide among young Black men in Toronto: An unrecognized public health crisis? *Canadian Journal of Public Health, 104*(1), e12-e14.

Krohn, M. D., Schmidt, N. M., Lizotte, A. J., & Baldwin, J. M. (2011). The impact of multiple marginality on gang membership and delinquent behavior for Hispanic, African American, and White male adolescents. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, 27*(1), 18-42.

Lafortune, D., Morselli, C., Guay, J.-P., Fredette, C., Gagnon, C., & Royer, M.-N. (2016). *Programme de suivi intensif de Montréal – Gangs de rue*. Rapport d'évaluation final. Submitted to Public Safety Canada. Research Summary available from: https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/2017-s007/index-en.aspx

Lauderdale, M., & Burman, M. (2009). Contemporary patterns of female gangs in correctional settings. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 19*, 258-280.

Li, X., Stanton, B., Pack, R., Harris, C., Cottrell, L., & Burns, J. (2002). Risk and protective factors associated with gang involvement among urban African American adolescents. *Youth & Society, 34*(2), 172-194.

Ngo, H. V. (2010). *Unravelling identities and belonging: Criminal gang involvement of youth from immigrant families*. Calgary, AB: Centre for Newcomers.

Nimmo, M. (2001). *The 'invisible' gang members: A report on female gang association in Winnipeg*. Winnipeg, MN: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Owusu-Bempah, A., & Wortley, S. (2014). Race, crime, and criminal justice in Canada. In S. Bucerius & M. Tonry (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ethnicity, Crime, & Immigration*. Retrieved from Oxford Handbooks Online.

Peterson, D. (2012). Girlfriends, gun-holders, and ghetto-rats? Moving beyond narrow views of girls in gangs. In S. Miller, L. D. Leve, & P. K. Kerig (Eds.), *Delinquent girls: Contexts, relationships and adaptation* (pp. 71-84). New York, NY: Springer.

Peterson, D., & Morgan, K. A. (2014). Sex differences and the overlap in youths' risk factors for onset of violence and gang involvement. *Journal of Crime and Justice, 37*(1), 129-154.

Preston, J. P., Carr-Stewart, S., & Bruno, C. (2012). The growth of Aboriginal youth gangs in Canada. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 32*(2), 193-207.

Pyrooz, D. C., Sweeten, G., & Piquero, A. R. (2013). Continuity and change in gang membership and gang embeddedness. *Journal of Research in Crime & Delinquency, 50*, 239-271.

Reed, E., Silverman, J. G., Ickovics, J. R., Gupta, J., Welles, S. L., Santana, M. C., & Raj, A. (2010). Experiences of racial discrimination & relation to violence perpetration and gang involvement among a sample of urban African American men. *Journal of Immigrant Minority Health, 12*, 319-326.

Rossiter, M. J., & Rossiter, K. R. (2009). *Immigrant youth and crime: Stakeholder perspectives on risk and protective factors.* PMC Working Paper Series. Edmonton, AB: Prairie Metropolis Centre, University of Alberta.

Salole, A. T., & Abdulle, Z. (2015). Quick to punish : An examination of the school to prison pipeline for marginalized youth. *Canadian Review of Social Policy, 72/73*, 124-168.

Sersli, S., Salazar, J., & Lozano, N. (2010). *Gang prevention for new immigrant and refugee youth in BC.* Retrieved from http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/crime-prevention/community-crime-prevention/publications/gang-prevention-immigrant-refugee.pdf

Sinclair, R., & Grekul, J. (2012). Aboriginal youth gangs in Canada: (de)constructing an epidemic. *First People Child & Family Review, 7*(1), 2-28.

Smith-Moncrieffe, D. (2013). *Youth Gang Prevention Fund projects. What did we learn about what works in preventing gang involvement?* Ottawa, ON: Public Safety Canada: Ottawa. Available from: https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/yth-gng-prvntn-fnd/index-en.aspx

Snider., C., Wiebe, F., Mahmood, J., Christensen, T., & Kehler, K. (n. d.). *Community assessment of a gang exit strategy for Winnipeg, Manitoba. A community-academic collaboration between the Gang Action Interagency Network (GAIN) and University of Manitoba.* GAIN, The Manitoba Institute of Child Health, and the University of Manitoba.

Statistics Canada (2011). *Aboriginal peoples in Canada: First Nations people, Métis and Inuit.* National Household Survey, Analytical Document. Ottawa, ON: Author.

Tobin, K. (2008). *Gangs: An individual and group perspective.* New York, NY: Prentice Hall.

Vincent, G., Guy, L. S., & Grisso, T. (2012). *Risk assessment in juvenile justice: A guidebook for implementation. New York, NY: Models for Change.* Available from: http://modelsforchange.net/publications/346

Whitbeck, L., Sittner Hartshorn, K., & Walls, M. (2014). *Indigenous adolescent development: Psychological, social and historical contexts.* New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Wortley, S. (2011). *The Achievers Project: Positive Alternatives to Youth Gangs.* Toronto, ON. Evaluation Summary available from: https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/payg/index-en.aspx#ftn2-ref

Wortley, S., & Tanner, J. (2006). Immigration, social disadvantage and urban youth gangs. Results of a Toronto-area study. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research, 15*(2), 18-37.

Wortley, S., & Tanner, J. (2008). Respect, friendship, and racial injustice: Justifying gang membership in a Canadian city. In F. van Gemert, D. Peterson, & I.-L. Lien (Eds.), *Street gangs, migration and ethnicity* (pp. 192-208). Portland, OR: Wilan.